



Draft White-tailed Deer Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement

Cuyahoga Valley National Park
August 2013



The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- Passed in 1969 and is called the “foundation of modern American environmental protection” (CEQ 1997).
- Is a legal requirement for federal agencies, but is better described as an environmental planning process.
- Imposes analysis and public review requirements on federal decision makers.
- In this case, an Environmental Impact Statement is being prepared.



Actions Requiring NEPA Planning

- Any federal action or federal decision being considered that would, if implemented, have an impact on the quality of the human environment.
- Projects, plans, grants, official policy, permits may trigger the need for NEPA review.



Elements of the NEPA Planning Process

- Articulate the Purpose, Need for taking action.
- Look at a range of reasonable alternatives, including No Action.
- Analyze impacts using the best available scientific data.



Purpose of and Need for Action

- Purpose is a broad statement of goals and objectives that NPS intends to fulfill by taking action.
- Need is the answer to the question “Why is action being taken at this time?”



Objectives

- Objectives are a more specific statement of purpose.
- Objectives are “what must be achieved to a large degree for the action to be considered a success” (Director’s Order 12).
- All alternatives selected for detailed analysis must meet the objectives to a large degree and must resolve the purpose and need for action.



Alternatives

- Different ways to solve the problems identified in the purpose and need.
- Fall within stated constraints, including NPS policies.
- The “heart” of the NEPA environmental planning process.



Alternatives Must Be Reasonable...

- Technically feasible
- Economically feasible
- Display common sense
- Meet the objectives of taking action
- Not necessarily the cheapest or easiest solution



No Action Alternative Must Be Included

- “No action” is the continuation of current management actions into the future.
- Action alternatives are compared to the no action alternative to determine what would happen if action is taken, versus what would happen if current management is continued.



NEPA Public Participation

- The Interested and Affected Public are involved and informed.
- Public scoping and Draft EIS comment periods
- NEPA documents are meant to be focused, analytic, and written in plain language.



How to Provide Comments on the Draft Plan/EIS

- Accepting comments at this meeting on comment cards, flipcharts and at the computer station
- You can submit comments directly on-line on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/CUVA>



How to Provide Comments on the Draft Plan/EIS

- Mail or Hand deliver comments to:
Superintendent
Cuyahoga Valley National Park
15610 Vaughn Road
Brecksville, Ohio 44141
Attn: Deer Management Plan



Substantive Comments

- Not a Vote
- Purpose, Need, Objectives
- Range of Alternatives
- Elements of Alternatives/Preferred Alternative
- Impact Analysis
- Additional Studies/Data



Project Schedule

- Public review and comment on Draft Plan/EIS

July-September 2013

- Analyze public comments and prepare Final Plan/EIS

Fall/Winter 2013/2014

- Release Final Plan/EIS

Summer 2014

- Issue Record of Decision and begin plan implementation

Fall 2014



The public comment period on the
Draft Plan/EIS will be open
through
September 24, 2013



Project Purpose

- The **purpose** of the CUVA White-tailed Deer Management Plan/ EIS is to develop a deer management plan that supports long-term protection, preservation, and restoration of native species and other park resources.





Project Need

- Action is **needed** at this time to ensure that
 - Deer do not become the dominant force in the ecosystem...
 - Natural distribution, abundance, and diversity of plant and animal species do not continue to be adversely affected by white-tailed deer
 - Declining forest regeneration is addressed... and adverse changes to wildlife habitat and forest structure and composition do not occur over time.
 - The park's cultural landscape preservation goals and mandates are not compromised...
 - Deer management actions are coordinated with other jurisdictional entities and other stakeholders.





Objectives

Management Methodology

- Develop and implement informed, scientifically defensible vegetation and wildlife impact levels and corresponding measures of deer population size that would serve as thresholds for taking adaptive management actions within the park.





Objectives

Vegetation

- Ensure that deer behavior ... does not adversely affect:
 - Natural abundance, distribution, and diversity of native herbaceous and woody plant species.
 - Native vegetative species of concern, including rare, threatened or endangered species.
 - Native vegetative species through dispersal, spread, and facilitation of exotic, invasive species.





Objectives

Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

- Prevent deer behavior ... from adversely impacting the natural abundance, distribution, and diversity of plant and animal species...
- Protect habitat of threatened and endangered species from adverse impacts related to deer behavior
- Maintain a healthy white-tailed deer population within the park while protecting other park resources.





Objectives

Cultural Resources

- Ensure that deer behavior does not adversely affect the cultural landscape.





Objectives

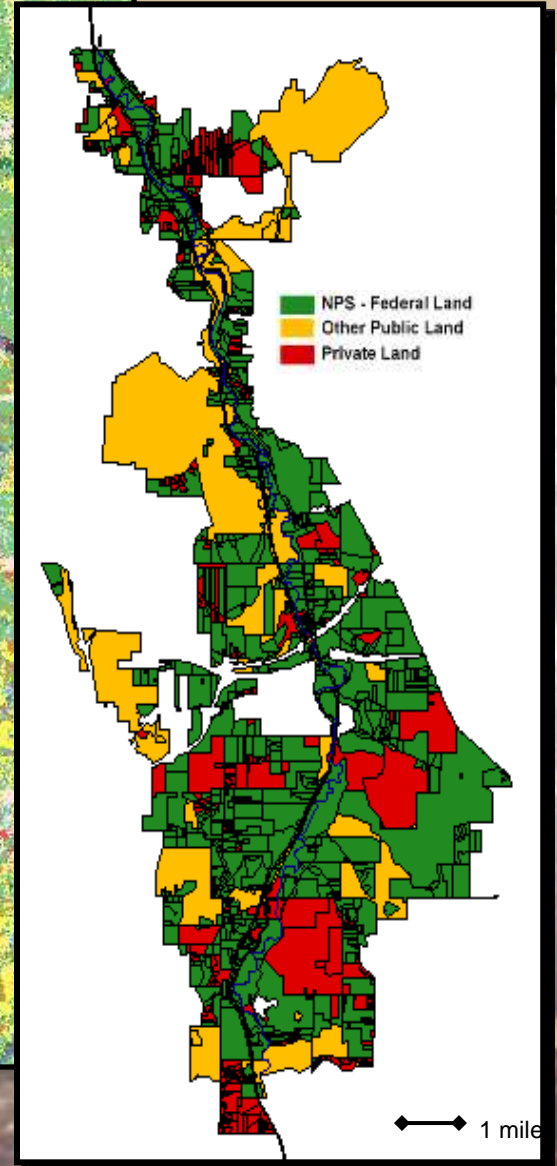
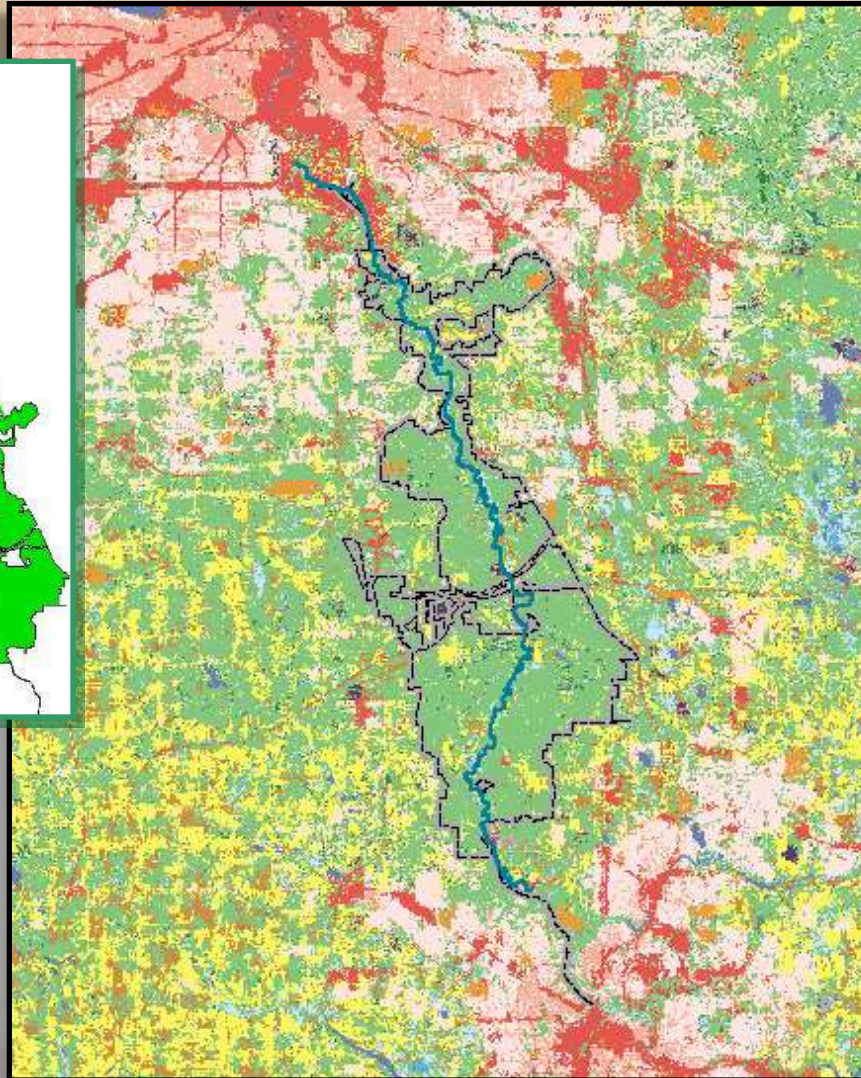
Visitor Experience

- Enhance public awareness and understanding of NPS resource management issues, policies, and mandates, as they pertain to deer management.
- Ensure visitors the opportunity to view healthy deer in the natural environment at population levels that do not adversely impact visitors' enjoyment of other native species in the natural landscape.



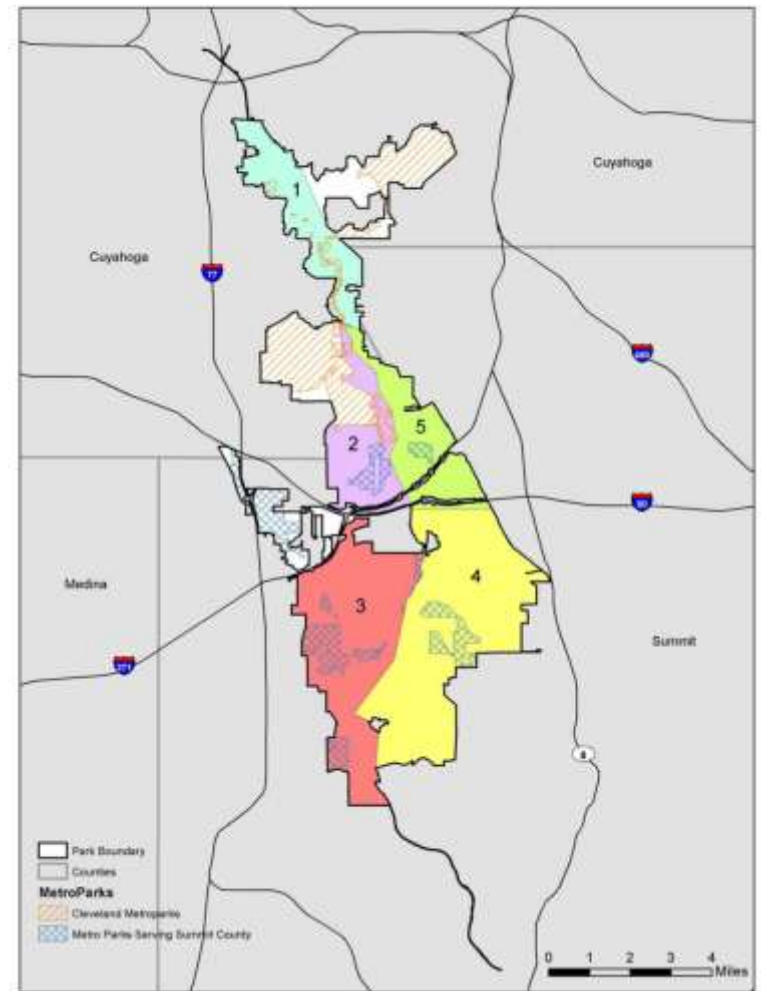
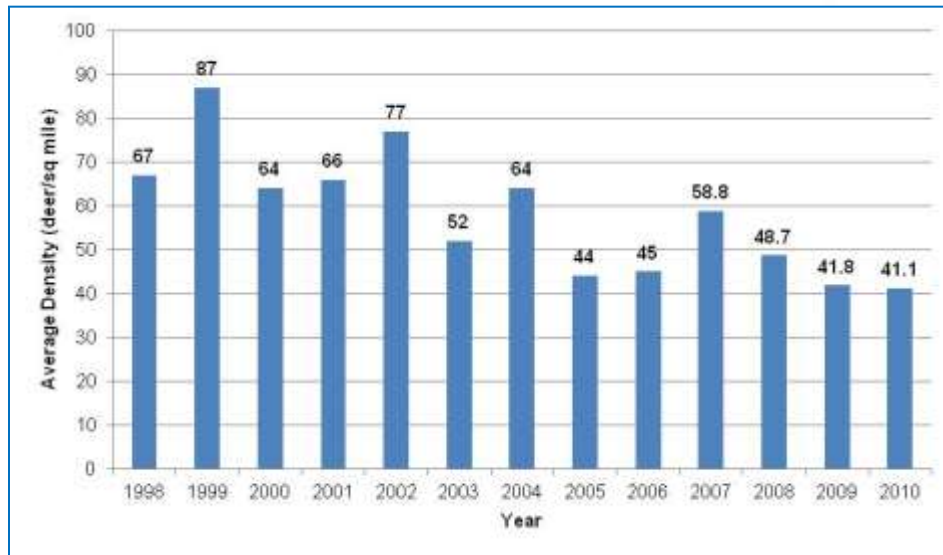
Cuyahoga Valley National Park Ohio

U.S. Department of Interior
National Park Service





Deer Population





Vegetation





Vegetation

10 x 10 m Enclosures



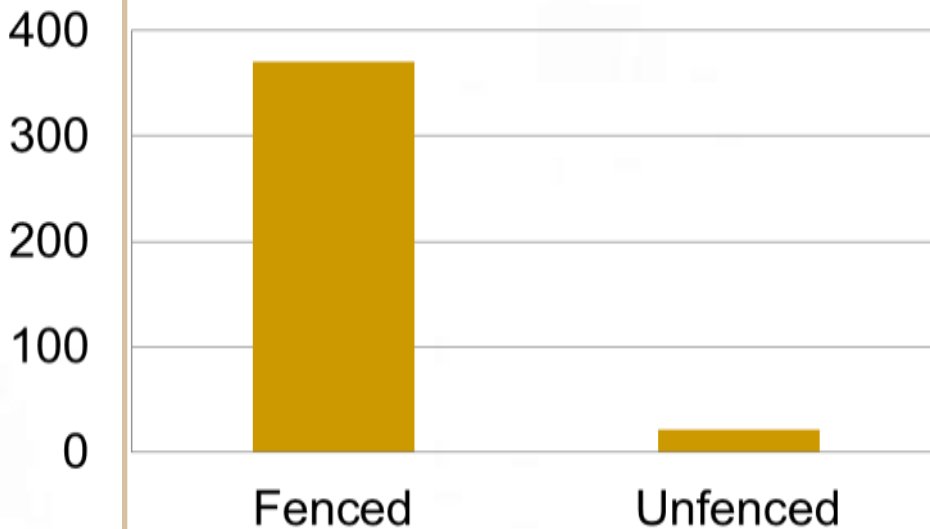
Trillium Enclosures



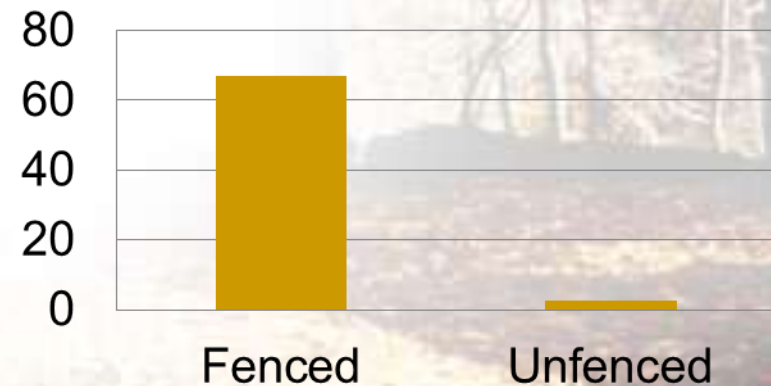


Vegetation

No. Tall Seedlings

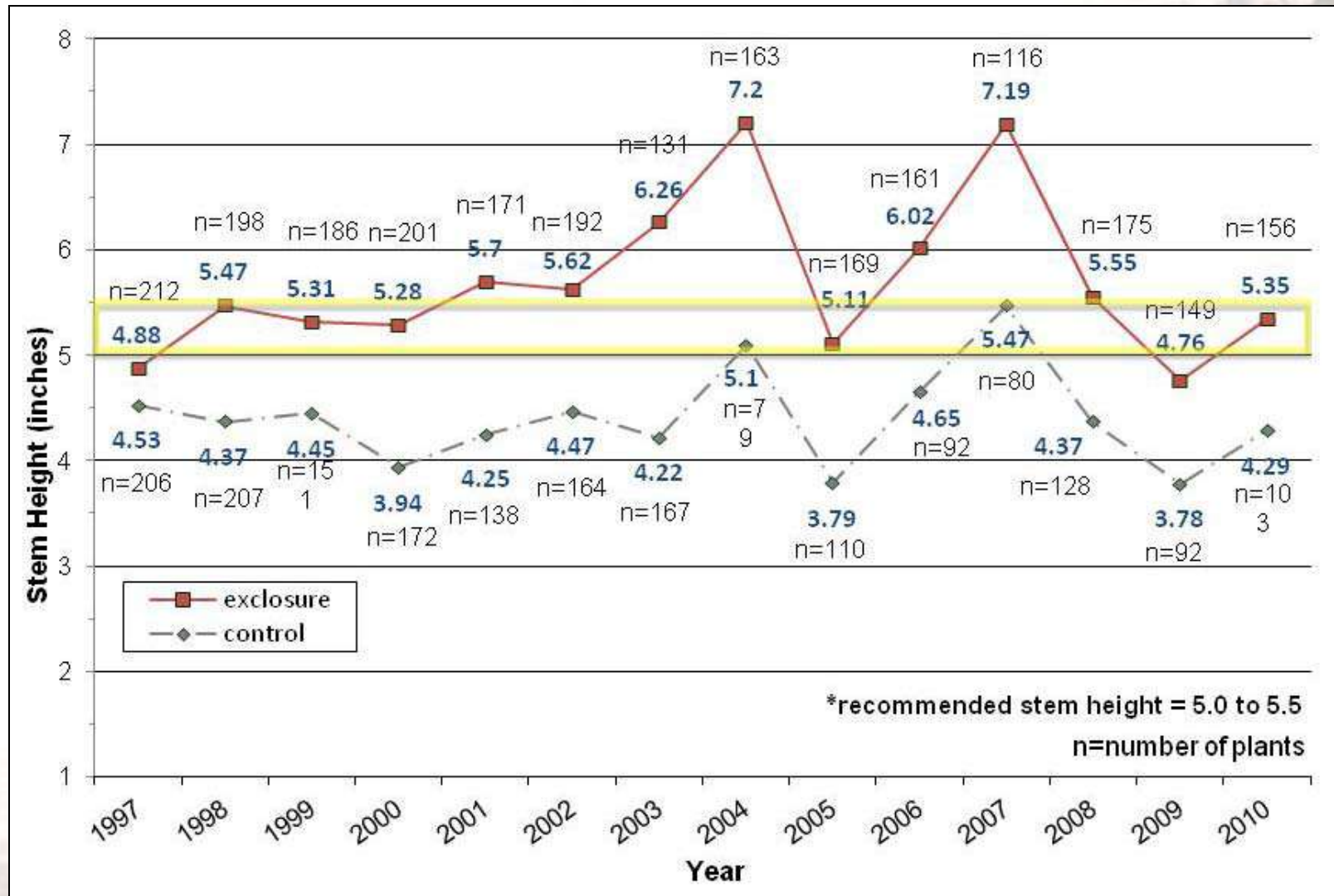


Height of Tallest Seedling



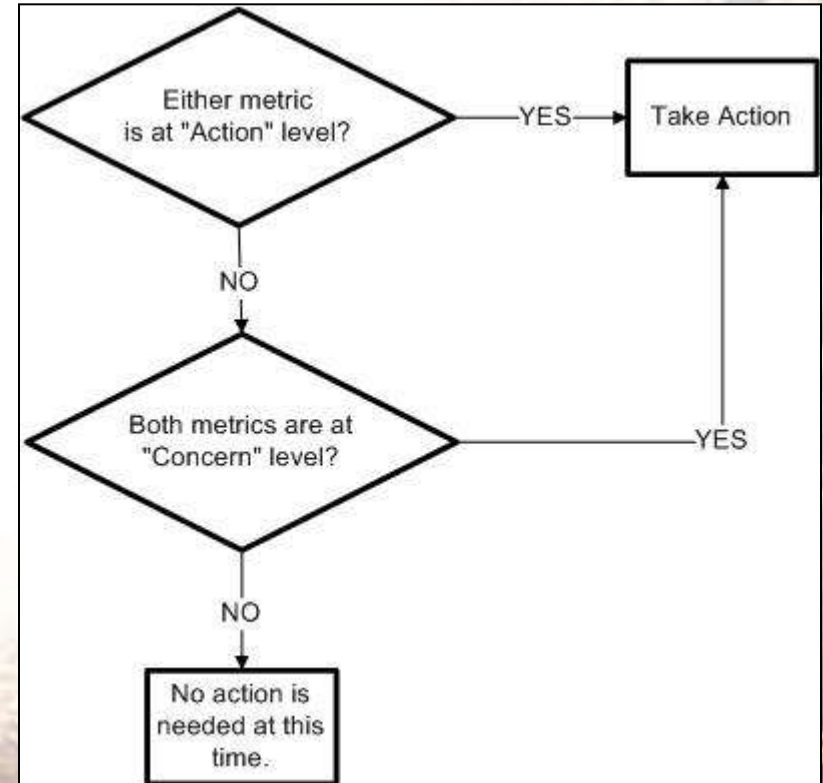
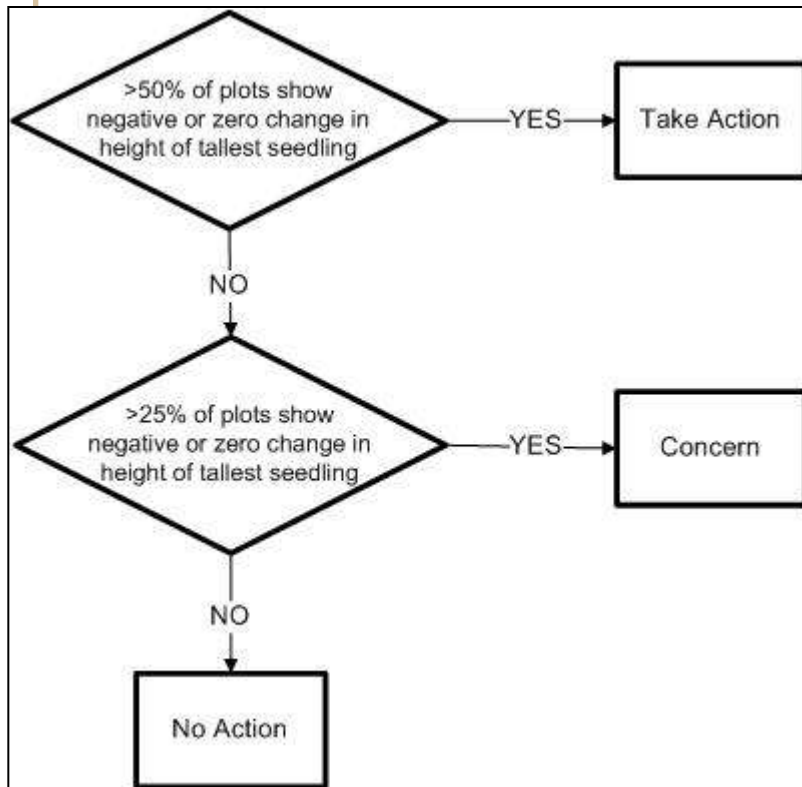


Vegetation





Action Thresholds (Vegetation)





Alternatives Considered but Dismissed

- Managed hunt/ Public hunting
- Predator reintroduction
- Use of poison
- Capture and relocation
- Supplemental feeding
- Fencing entire park
- Repellents
- Landscape modification
- Reproductive control alone





Alternatives Analyzed

- A. *No Action* – Continue deer and vegetation monitoring, data management and research
- B. *Combined Nonlethal Actions* – Large-scale deer exclosures and nonsurgical reproductive control of does





Reproductive Control Agent

- Federally approved for free-ranging populations
- Multiyear efficacy
- Remote injection
- Safe for human consumption
- Proven success without behavioral impacts





Alternatives Analyzed

- *C. Lethal Actions* – Direct herd reduction through sharpshooting and Capture/Euthanasia (when necessary).
- *D. Combined Lethal and Nonlethal Actions* – Herd reduction through sharpshooting and capture/euthanasia followed by nonsurgical reproductive control of does for maintenance. (Environmentally preferable and Preferred).





Preferred Alternative

- Density goal reached rapidly
- Variety and flexibility in management options

Year	Total number of deer	Number of deer removed	Number of deer following removal	Deer Density following removal (deer/sq. mile)
1	1,669	375	1,294	32
2	1,553	375	1,178	29
3	1,414	375	1,039	26
4	1,247	375	872	21
5 and Beyond	1,046	175 **	871	21

**392 does treated with approved fertility agent every 2 years





Costs of Alternatives (Annual)

- A. No Action \$50,062
- B. Combined Nonlethal Actions \$529,526
- C. Lethal Actions \$157,985
- D. Combined Lethal/Nonlethal Actions \$280,074





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